There turns tip to-day, out of a long-neglected box, a charming note about " The Merchant of Venice " from some unknown friend.

"Playing to such houses," he wrote, "is not an encouraging pursuit; but to give to human beings the greatest pleasure that they are capable of receiving must always be worth doing. You have given rne that pleasure, and I write to offer you my poor thanks. Portia has always been my favourite heroine, and I saw her last night as sweet and lovely as I had always hoped she might be. I hope that I shall see you again in other Shakespearean characters, and that nothing will tempt you to withhold your talents from their proper sphere."

The audiences may have been scanty, but they were wonderful. O'Shaughnessy, Watts-Dunton, Oscar Wilde, Alfred Gilbert, and, I think Swinburne were there. A poetic and artistic atmosphere pervaded the front of the house as well as the stage itself.

TOM TAYLOR AND LAVENDER SWEEP

I have read in some of the biographies of me that have been published from time to time, that I was chagrined at Coghlan's fiasco because it brought my success as Portia so soon to an end. As a matter of fact, I never thought about it. I was just sorry for clever Coghlan, who was deeply hurt and took his defeat hardly and moodily. He wiped out the public recollection of it to a great extent by his Evelyn in " Money," Sir Charles Pomaader in " Masks

and Faces/' and Claude Melnotte in " The Lady of Lyons," which he played with me at the Princess's Theatre for one night only in the August following the withdrawal of " The Merchant of Venice."